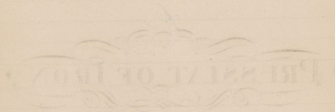


*no 94**An**Inaugural Essay**On the use**of**as a remedy in**Intermittent Fevers &c**By William H. Geyerhof**Pennsylvania**1823.**Reprints March 24th 1823*

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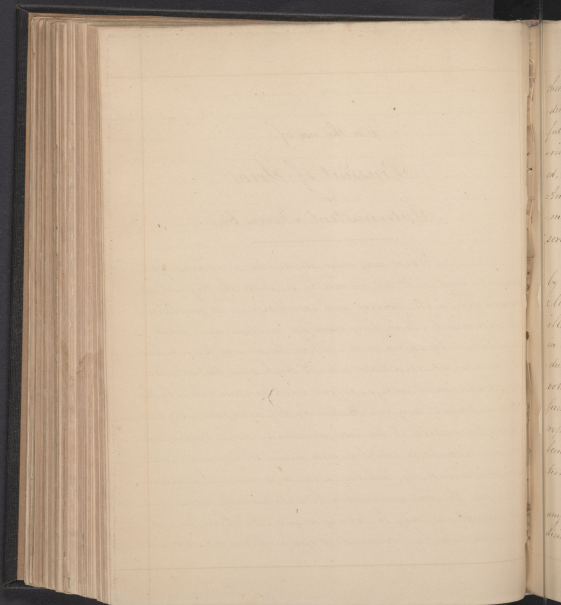
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On the use of
Prussiat of Iron
in
Intermittent Fevers &c.

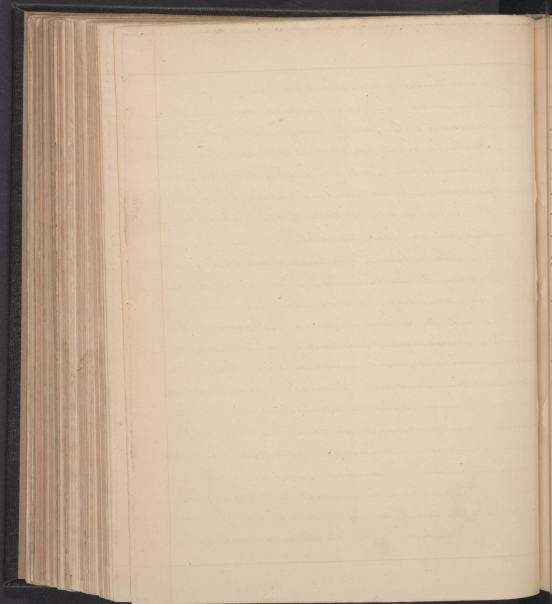
When any new medicine is ushered forth, accompanied as it too frequently is, with the highest encomiums on its powers and excellence, and proclaimed superior to others, long used in practice, and well established by experience. When the sources from which it proceeds are even known to be high and respectable, we should, nevertheless, before adopting implicitly the declarations of any one, cautiously try, and carefully compare the results of the new medicine, with those which we were taught to employ, and whose efficacy we have seen confirmed by practice and experience. In many instances the facts given, may be intrinsically correct, but the deductions may be falsely drawn. In others, useful remedies may be denigrated, or unfairly considered, and



thereby have a tendency to induce a greater degree of confidence, in the powers of a new and favorite medicine, than future experience will justify, and the article itself incite. By the too hasty adoption of a practice thus founded, many may be led to commit highly dangerous errors. And this remark is not the least applicaible to intermittent fevers, the consequences of which, are oftentimes serious, and not unfrequently fatal.

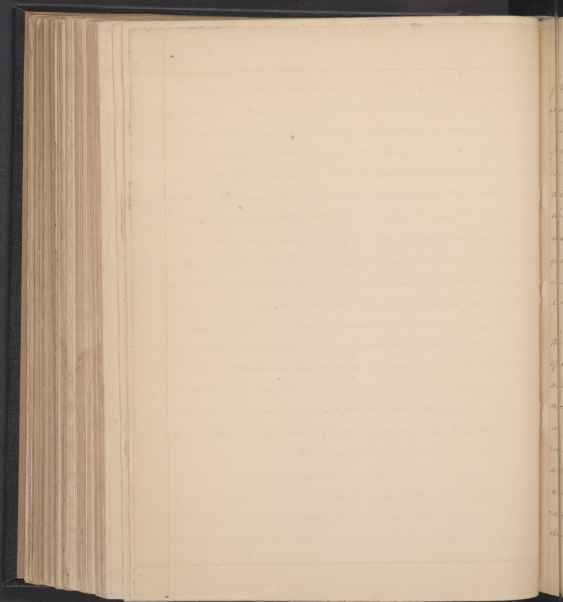
The subject of this thesis, has been suggested by the paper of Dr. Sellickoffer, of Frederick county, Maryland, consisting of a statement of several cases, illustrative of the remedial powers of Quinacine, given in Intermitting and Remitting forms, and some deductions drawn therefrom, as published in the fifth volume of the American Medical Recorder. And also, from having heard that considerable confidence was reposed in it, by several physicians of this city, who have been using it since the publication of the paper, above mentioned.

An opportunity, as good perhaps, as could any where be found, of testing the real utility of this medicine, was afforded me, by my situation, as resident student.



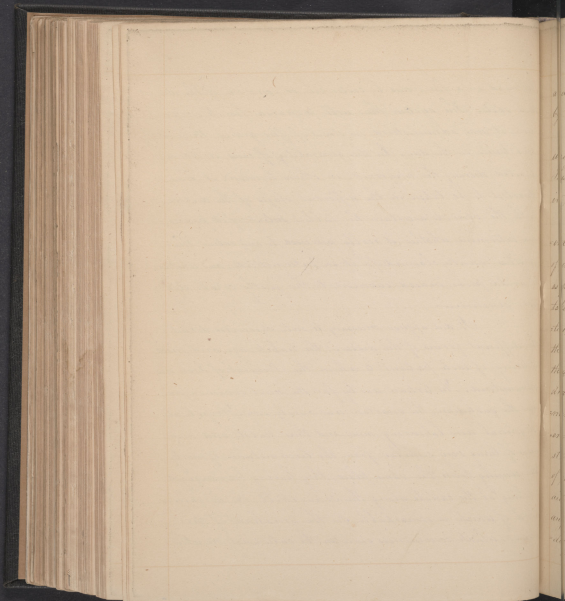
dent in the Philadelphia Almshouse, where great numbers of patients affected with this disease came for treatment. I had here too, an opportunity of comparing the success of a variety of other medicines, employed for the same purpose in intermittents, with the Success of Sarsaparilla; but of all others, not commonly used, this was most extensively employed. It was prescribed by the attending physician (Doctor Jackson), and more or less, by several of the students of the House. It was exhibited in all the forms of intermittent; in its different stages; and it was taken during the apyrexia. And in all the cases, phlebotomy came under my care; prior to the administration of the Sarsaparilla of Sarsaparilla, or any other medicine exhibited with the same view, the stomach was evacuated by an emetic, or the alimentary canal by a mercurial purge. Emetics however were preferred, and consequently more generally employed; the following combination was frequently used.

Recipe Specie Di
Part Antimony gr. iiii
This prescription often answered a twofold purpose, by producing sweating, and operating upon the bowels at the same time. Occasionally, however, calomel was given, and



followed in a few hours by castor oil, or some one of the neutral salts. The system thus well prepared for its reception, it was administered in doses of five grains, three or four times in the day. In the generality of cases, it was exhibited during the apyrexia; in others however, it was directed to be taken in the different stages of the disease, with the view, to ascertain the fullest extent of its powers, and, determine whether, it really possessed to any extent the qualities recently claimed for it in intermittents, and whether it would prove, indeed, superior, to the justly celebrated *tertium*.

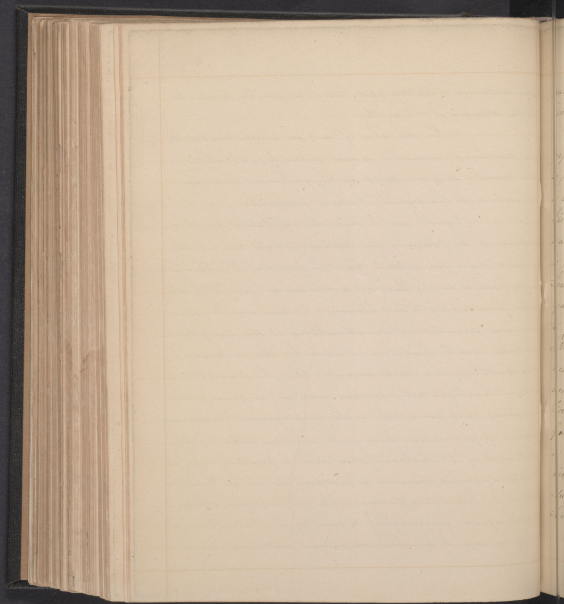
It did appear necessary to note down in detail the different forms of the disease; the habits, age and mode of living, of each patient to whom the *Prociat* of Ison was administered. The tertian was by far the most common form, next the quotidian, the quartan was rarely seen. The patients in general, were labouring men; and their habits and manner of living very similar, from the circumstance of nearly all coming from the same place, they having been engaged working at the canals along the Schuylkill, the neighbourhood of which is remarkable, for the prevalence of this disease, which commences early in the autumnal months.



and continues uninterrupted, till it is finally arrested by the accession of cold weather.

The number of cases in which this article was employed, amounted as near as can be recollected to forty. This number was considered amply sufficient to ascertain its value in the disease, if any it possessed. V

I will now however, before stating my observations on the powers of this medicine, take the liberty of inserting a few extracts from the paper of Dr Zeltichoff, as published in the Recorder; a remark or two of Dr Clark taken from his work on Materia Medica and Therapeutics, and show hereafter, admitting at the same time, the cures said to have been effected by this medicine, as they doubtless were, to be correct; that the deductions drawn therefrom are erroneous, and so far from recommending such an article to the employment or consideration of physicians, have quite a reverse effect. The statement of Dr Zeltichoff as will be presently seen is of such a candid character as to destroy itself, without the aid of Dr Clark's experience with the medicine, which is any thing, but encouraging to employ it. Notwithstanding, he says, "It has been employed with considerable



success. These, and, like statements, however, will not, I imagine, be difficult to explain.

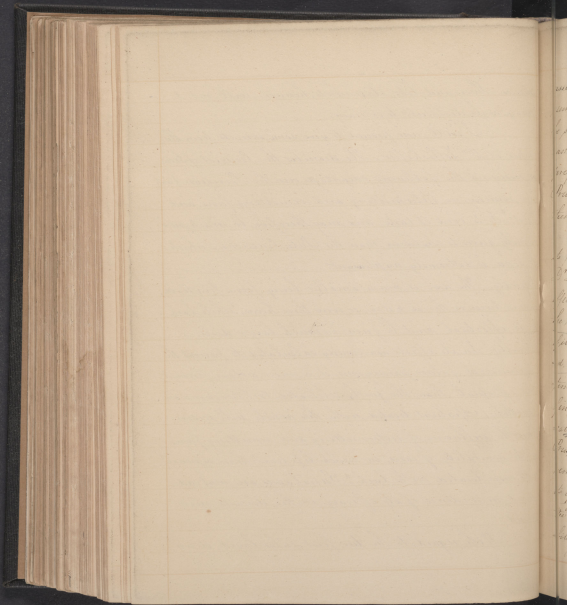
I will now proceed to give some extracts from the paper of *10^r Lellichiff*. He describes the Prussiat of Seid as possessing the following advantages over the Peruvian bark as a remedy in intermitting and remitting fevers, and First: "It is void of taste, and may therefore be much more readily given to children than the Pale Cinchona, which to some is extremely unpleasant."

Secondly. The dose is much smaller being from four to six grains twice or thrice a day, or every three hours, while bark to be effectual must be given in much larger doses.

Thirdly. In its effects as a remedy calculated to prevent the recurrence of future paroxysms, it is more certain, prompt, and effectual, than the justly celebrated Cort Cinchona, and

Fourthly, "Spontaneous treated with this article will recover from the influence of intermitting and remitting fevers in the generality of cases, in much less time than is usual with cases treated with bark." Several cases are next adduced in evidence of its efficacy in the diseases mentioned.

With regard to the two first rules laid down,



assuredly, no objections can be urged; on the contrary, it would seem desirable, that such medicines as are void of taste, should be sought after and employed, provided, in so doing, we do not cast away important and useful remedies, by giving a preference on these accounts to inferior articles. And if the Prussiat of Iron was not inferior to the Peruvian bark, there would, indeed, be important considerations.

But we differ widely in our estimate of its powers in preventing the recurrence of future paroxysms. Dr. Lelieker says, that it is "more certain, prompt, and effectual," than the justly celebrated *Cort. cinchona*. Directly the reverse of this, have I uniformly found the consequence of its employment: for, for every case the disease was protracted, and not infrequently attended with nausea, and sometimes vomiting; paroxysm after paroxysm occurred, till finally the treatment was abandoned, and a more efficacious one substituted; and even in those cases where the Prussiat of Iron, did since, some power, in ultimately removing them, it was not until after repeated paroxysms its effects were produced, and the patients thus worn out by the long continuance of the disease, were detained from discharging in the Infirmary, longer than those who were treated

after the mode generally pursued. (See Essay on the
History of the Prussiat of Sere.) If then, I may be allowed to judge from the
many cases I have known and seen of its effects, I must say,
that the Prussiat of Sere, certainly does not deserve to be
compared in point of efficacy, with many of the Tonics
occasionally used in intermissions, indubitably inferior
to the pale Aconitum. It indeed, seems to me to be much
inferior to arsenic, calomel, peruvian bark, and many other
medicines not unfrequently used.

This, therefore, is in direct variance with the
observations and experience of the writer in the Recorder:
how it should so happen, is to me unaccountable; but,
as it is so, and as I have undertaken to state the trials
made with the medicine, it is but justice to do so cor-
rectly. Whether the difference in the habits and ways of
living, of the different class of individuals, in whose cases
it was employed, or whether local peculiarities will have
any weight in explaining, why the same medicine should
produce so opposite effects, will perhaps be difficult to
determine.

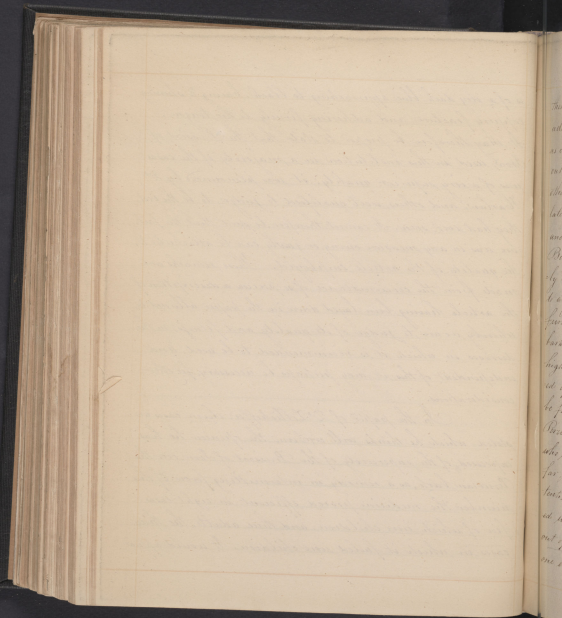
Dr. Follicheffer remarks, that in making use of
the Prussiat of Sere, care must be taken to select that which

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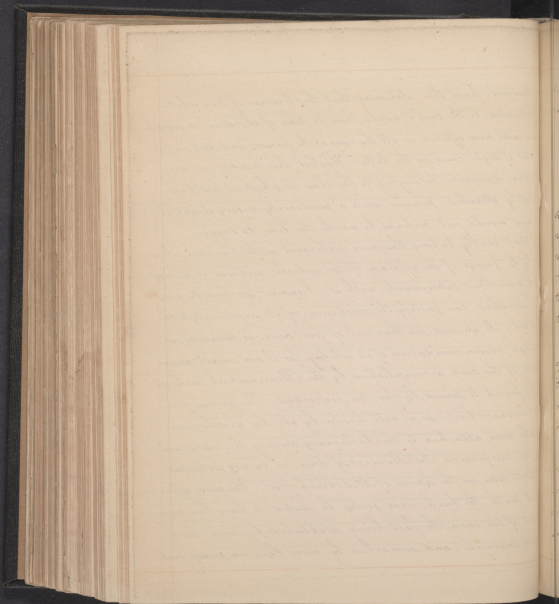
a of a very dark blue approaching to black, having a shining
coppery fracture, and adhering firmly to the tongue.
It may therefore be proper to state, that the Prussiat of
Good, used in this institution in a majority of the cases
was of a very superior quality: it was pronounced by Dr
Harlan, and others, well qualified to judge, to be the best
they had ever seen. It cannot therefore be said that the fail-
ure was in any measure owing, or justly can be attributed to,
the quality of the article employed. These remarks are
made from the circumstance of a precise description of
the article having been layed down in the paper alluded to,
whereby we are to judge of its quality and fitness, in the
diseases in which it is recommended to be used, and
independent of this, it may perhaps be necessary for other
considerations.

In the paper of Dr Lelichoff, eleven cases are
stated, which he thinks will confirm the opinion he has
expressed, of the superiority of the Prussiat of Good, over the
Prussian tart, as a remedy in intermitting fevers. Of this
number the medicine proved efficient in eight cases,
five of which were children, and three adults, the three
cases in which it failed were children. It would appear



therefore, from this statement, that the Peruvian of Spon is better adapted to the cases of adults, than to those of children, inasmuch as cures were effected in all the cases of the former, and but in five out of eight cases in the latter. Whether this however, or any other medicine belonging to the class to which it has been lately attached, possesses such a peculiarity is very doubtful and would not perhaps, be worth the time to enquire.

But really, taking this very statement as the standard, wholly to judge of the efficacy of the article, without reference to any other experiments with it, I cannot see how the events furnished, can justify the conclusion, of its superiority to the bark. To succeed in three out of four cases, is certainly no high recommendation of its utility, for I am much decided if the cures accomplished by the Peruvian bark, will not be found to exceed, by far, this proportion. The species of the Peruvian bark, so well known by all the gentlemen who were attached to the Infirmary during the past season, far surpassed the Peruvian of Spon, in curing intermit-
tents, even in the hands of Dr. L. Alcock. The cures effected with the bark may justly be stated, to have comprised out of ten cases, the fact being established by more than one example, and remarked by more than one individual.



It may not be amiss to mention that the following prescription was extensively used, viz

R Sulf Cinchon opt. - - 3j

Consuet Opia - - 3i

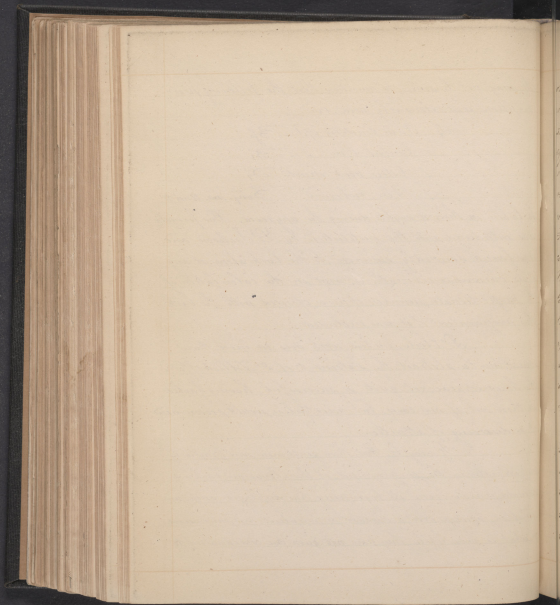
✓ Citric Acid concen'd ʒi

✓ Vin rubrum ʒviij. an. And to

be taken in three draughts during the apyrexia. This formula was introduced into the institution by Dr. Anclure, and was found decidedly superior to the bark alone, or any of its various combinations; and in the calculation of the proportionate number of cures effected with the bark this preparation of it was included.

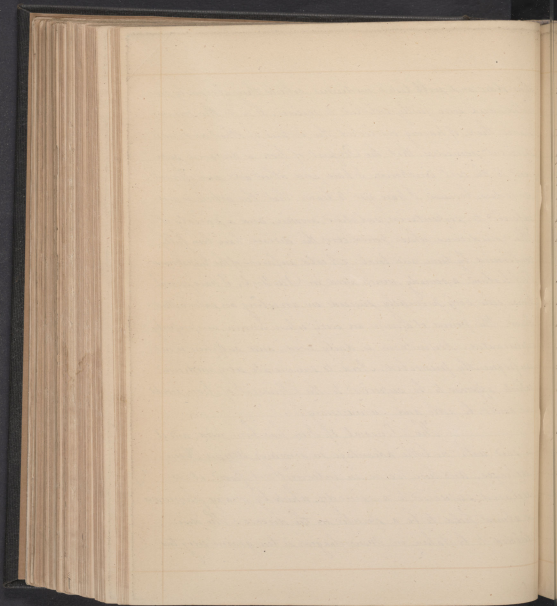
Dr. Clarke, in his work does no more, than repeat in the abstract the statement of Dr. Zollicoffer. He however was not quite so successful, having failed in three out of six cases, but nevertheless would recommend it as deserving of attention.

It may be, that these gentlemen were peculiarly unfortunate in the employment of the Peruvian bark - a remedy which from its beginning has displayed such unrivalled powers, over a disease so prevalent and mischievous, or, what is more likely, they have not given due consideration to

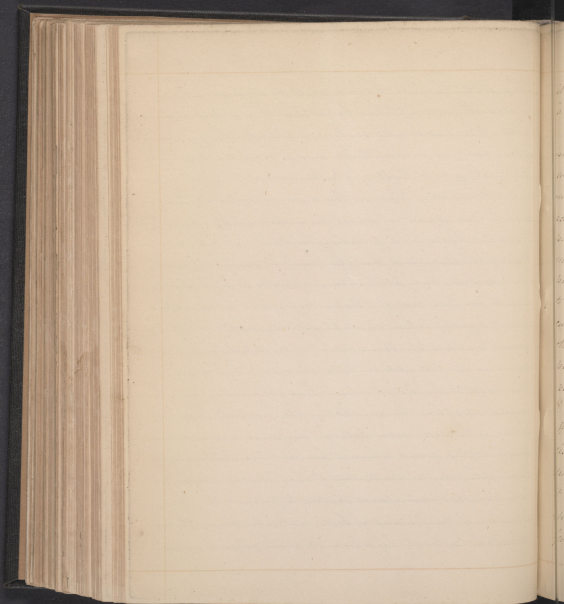


the slow and well tested medicines which they obviously pre-
sented, and were justly entitled to receive. It is to the circum-
stance then, of having overlooked the virtues of other and more
efficient remedies, that the Prussiat of Iron is declared super-
ior to the best Cinchona. I have said other and more efficient
remedies, because I have yet to learn, that this article is not
inferior to serpentaria, sulphur, arsenic, and a variety of
other medicines, whose power over the disease have been fully
confirmed by time and trial. A cold infusion of the Eupatorium
Purshianum, a remedy much used in New York, I have several
times seen very promptly succeed in arresting an intermittent
fever. The powers of arsenic are every where known, and properly
appreciated. Serpentaria is daily used, and sulphur is not
unfrequently prescribed. And to communicate every medicine
which appears to be superior to the Prussiat of Iron would
no doubt, be idle and unnecessary.

The Prussiat of Iron has been used, and it
is said with no little advantage in arresting uterine Hem-
orrhages; and here too as in intermittent fever, it is
declared superior to a remedy, which by many physicians
is almost held to be a specific in the disease. The dose
directed to be taken in Menorrhagia, is ten grains every two

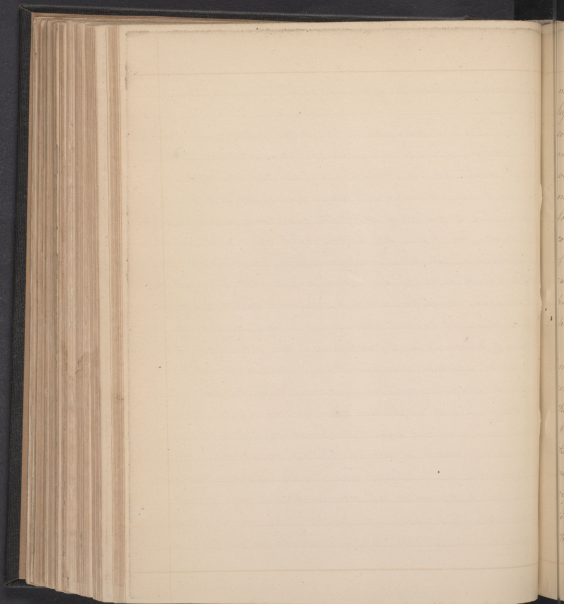


hours until the flow of blood shall be arrested, which is generally accomplished by the time three or four doses are taken. The dose it will be observed is double the quantity of that given in intermittents, and is exhibited twice as often. It was Dr Hall of Baltimore, with whom the use of the Prussiat of Iron, in this disease, originates. He published an account of several cases successfully treated by it, in the *Lycæum*, a periodical work of that city. Doctor Young of Maryland, has also found it successful, in the same disease, and, Dr Thomas employed it with decided utility in three cases of Menorrhagia, and in one of these cases it was not exhibited until after the acetate of lead had proved ineffectual. This account of the article will be found in the last edition of the *American Dispensatory*. This practice has not, I believe been followed by any other physicians, at least by none in this city, nor will it perhaps, so long as the *Saccharum Saturni* continues to prove more serviceable in the disease, which it has hitherto uniformly displayed. But if the acetate of Lead should happen to fail, and no circumstances existed to prevent the administration of the Prussiat of Iron, certainly, from the very respectable authority by which it comes recommended,



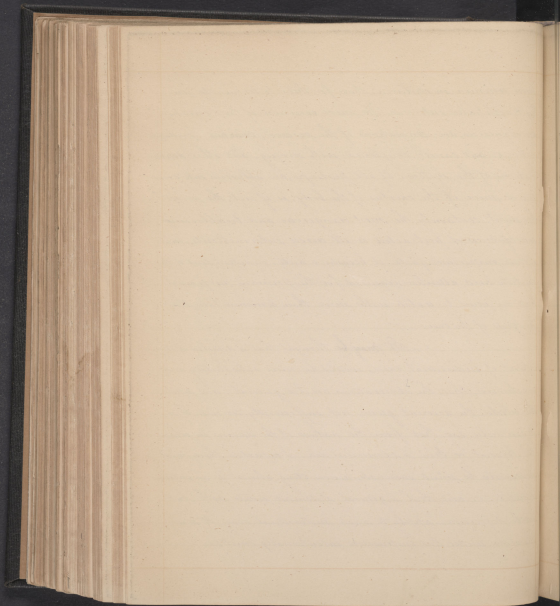
it would seem deserving of consideration, if not, entitled to a trial.

When I commenced the employment of the Lassarriat of Sion in intermittent fever it was expected that the agent would, at least, partially confirm the properties claimed for it, by its author. It, however, was not expected to accomplish to the whole extent, the qualities so lavishly ascribed to it. For I was not unmindful of the ardour and enthusiasm, which almost invariably accompanies the publicity of supposed discoveries; and induces an author to imagine qualities, which a medicine does not possess, powers which it cannot accomplish, and a superiority over those, to which it is not entitled. I did not forget the peculiar aptitude of intermittents, to degenerate into complaints, more serious and alarming than the disease itself. Dr. Chapman, in his lecture on intermittent fever, remarks "It is the imperative duty of the practitioner to cure this disease as speedily as possible. There is no disease more disagreeable to the patient, and though not immediately fatal, it is apt to degenerate into complaints of a very serious character. Thus, intermittents often run into continued fever, sometimes of a typhus nature; and nothing is



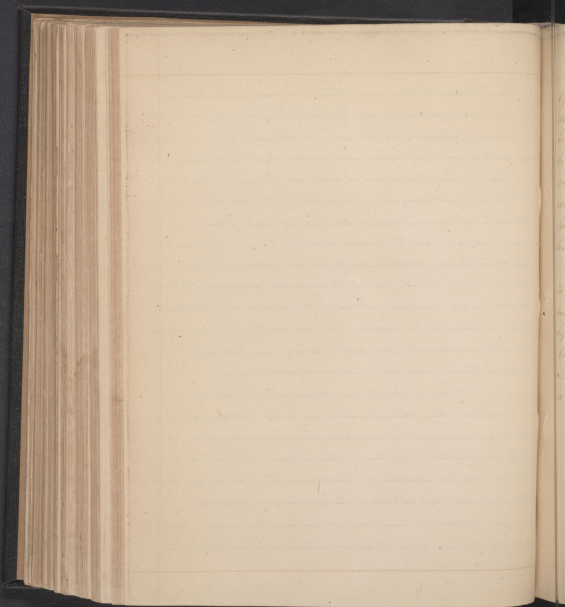
more common in children, than for them to terminate in hydrocephalus internus. The more common of the remote consequences, are, congestions of the viscera, scirrhus, indurations, and cancer, conjoined with dropsy, and other supurations of the system. Of all, perhaps, an effusion into some one or more of the cavities of the body, is, if not, the most frequent, certainly the most dangerous and troublesome consequence of protracted or ill cured intermittents, aware of these important facts, it became a duty, independent of the caution and attention required for the primary purpose it had in view, to watch with more than common care the progress of the case.

It may be thought that a detailed statement of individual cases, would be more satisfactory and conclusive, that the observations are too general; and upon the whole, the account given, not sufficiently concise. If so, I can only say, that from the nature of the disease in which the Process of Iron is recommended, I expected there must necessarily be much sameness, amounting almost to an entire repetition; and that a general statement would with but little difference, apply to each individual case. It was therefore under this impression intentionally omitted.



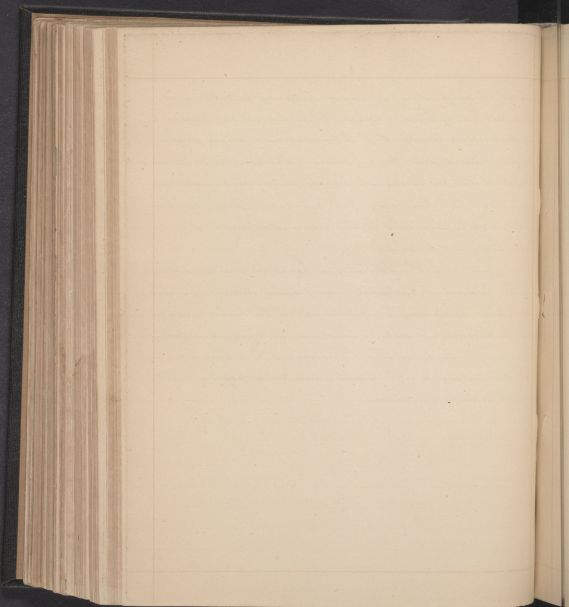
Since writing the foregoing, there has been published in the New York Medical and Physical Journal a paper entitled "A review of a treatise on the use of the Prussiat of Iron in intermitting and remitting fevers by Dr. T. L. Schaffer M.D. of Maryland." This it appears, is a review of a book published by D.D., and subsequently I perceive in his paper in the Recorder. Of the existence of the book alluded to, I was not aware, until I saw the review of it in the New York Journal, and from this it would seem to contain little more, than had been previously made public through the medium of several periodical journals. It in fact contains nothing new which is important, or which differs in the slightest degree from the statement first given, except, in detailing that which is there stated in a too condensed form.

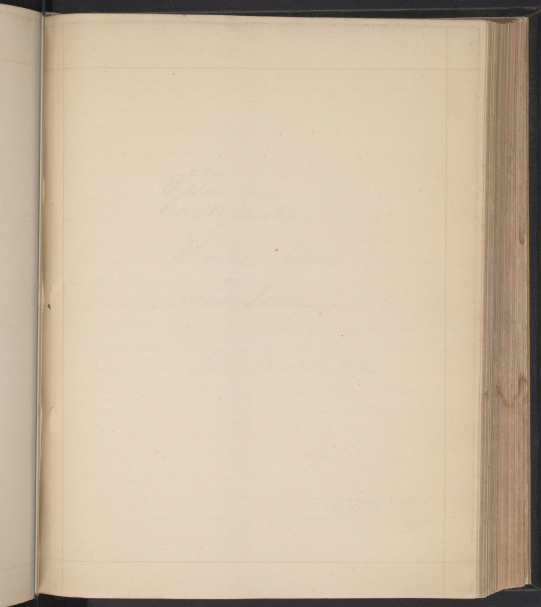
The author of the review after indicating as he imagines, those who are opposed to the introduction of new medicines into the Materia Medica; adopts emphatically the supposed virtues of the Prussiat of Iron; and without further ceremony, proceeds to place it among the number of "articles of the armory of medicine." He does not appear to have used it in a solitary case, but depends entirely on a statement, which experience will fail to confirm.



Of the impropriety of an augmentation of medicines it does not belong to me to speak. But thus much I may be permitted to say, that if the medicines which are to be introduced into the *Materia Medica*, possess more power in the disease in which they ~~may~~ be recommended, than the *Prussiat of Iron* has evinced in intermittent fever, surely, they will be but sorry additions to it and had better not be made.

Dr Sellicoffer, has it appears layed claim to the medical application of the *Prussiat of Iron*. here however he is mistaken, for independent of the book referred to by the reviewer, to disprove his claim; the more recent publication of the letter of *Dr Thomas* in the *American Dispensatory*, which is antecedent to the paper of 1821, is sufficiently conclusive.





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